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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the writing skills section of a language skills framework that was devised as part of a project to indicate language competencies necessary for functioning in English classrooms in grades one through six. The paper discusses the collection and grade leveling of the writing skills and describes the organization of those skills into a framework. It then explains the subsequent reorganization of the skills framework into a hierarchy of skills. The textbooks analyzed and the skills framework are appended. (FL)

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WRITING SKILLS FOR GRADES 1-6

Ann Humes

ABSTRACT

The collection and grade leveling of writing skills is discussed. The organization of these skills into a framework of skills is described, and then the subsequent reorganization of the skills framework into a hierarchy of skills is explained and qualified.

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WRITING SKILLS FOR GRADES 1-6*

Ann Humes

A Language Skills Framework was provided for a project that has as its purpose the task of indicating language competencies necessary for functioning in the 1-6 English classroom. These competencies are the criteria on which appropriate assessment instruments can be based.** Because such instruments measure instruction that actually occurs in the English classroom, the skills included reflect instructional conditions as they are, not as they should be. This paper describes the writing section of the Language Skills Framework.***

To determine the essential writing skills for the Language Skills Framework (LSF), the literature was searched to identify skills that are proposed as significant by language arts scholars and by state and local competency lists. Data on the instruction in students' language arts textbooks were also analyzed for skills. A comprehensive list of skills was thus compiled and then revised to eliminate non-critical skills, with the remaining skills being those most important for success in current school instructional programs. Grade levels were specified for these

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*The completion of this project was facilitated by input from Bruce Cronnell, Joseph Lawlor, Caroline Fieker, Teanna Boscon, and Larry Gentry.

**The purpose of the project was to specify assessment instruments that can assist in determining students' entry into and exit from the bilingual classroom. The two other components of the Language Skills Framework are reading and oral language.

***Writing skills for this project include not only the skills of composition, but also those language skills that are taught along with the composing process. Thus Writing here covers what is frequently called "English" or "language" (including such areas as mechanics, grammar, usage, and composition), as well as handwriting and spelling, which are sometimes treated as separate areas of instruction.

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critical skills, and the skills were categorized by content into a framework of writing skills. The skills were then reorganized into a hierarchy that more closely matches instructional practice and displays relationships among skills. Each of these procedures is discussed below.

SKILLS IDENTIFICATION

The educational community's intense interest in writing is a relatively recent phenomenon. The dearth of pertinent information about writing skills attests to this fact. Although some language arts authorities assert that current research on skills is increasingly available (Braun, 1971), the literature does not now provide adequate information on the specificity or range of critical writing skills. Moreover, important research advances that have been made in the theory of writing and language development have not yet been translated into practical classroom applications.

An adequate range or specificity of skills relevant to current classroom instruction is not delineated even by well-recognized language arts scholars. For example, Petty, Petty, Newman, and Skeen (in Squire, 1977) submit two categories of critical writing skills; they are both too brief and too general for the LSF's purposes:

Abilities Needed for Organization and Composition

1. To speak or write for particular purposes:

    a. to seek information
    b. to give directions
    c. to make explanations
    d. to give information
    e. to express feelings and/or opinions
    f. to persuade
    g. to make requests
    h. to comply with social amenities
    i. to provide entertainment, pleasure, or comfort

2. To choose content appropriate to the intended audience--that is, the reader or listener.

3. To use varied structures in accord with the purpose, the audience, and the situation. (p. 89)

Abilities Needed For Written Communication

1. To write legibly and neatly

2. To spell correctly the words that are needed.

3. To use accepted punctuation and capitalization.

4. To use accepted form and appropriate language in varying types of written communication. (p. 90)

Frequently the skill descriptions are less specific than those listed above. "Writes effectively" is the archetype of such general skills. Although "Writes effectively" is a desirable instructional objective, the specific component skills of effective writing must be delineated.

Other skills can be confusing because the "skill" often consists of a skill plus a task or item description. The following skill statement is typical of many of these purportedly critical skills:

> Given a painting or a picture of a painting, writes a description of the painting.

"Writes a description" is the skill; the rest of the statement describes the task. The same writing skill is often relisted as a separate skill that is differentiated only by the task that is attached; e.g., "Writes a description of a person." Such "skills" could be formulated interminably, considering the range of objects or entities for which a student could be asked to "Write a description."

Confusion is also perpetrated by the literature's failure to designate the component skills--or subskills--of a writing type* that are evoked by a skill statement such as "Writes a description . . ." (e.g., Uses sensory terms; Uses spatial ordering; Uses transitional expressions for spatial ordering). Any itemized subskills usually pertain to discourse in general, to "Writes effectively" (e.g., "All sentences pertain to the main idea"); they are not subskills of the specific writing type to be elicited.

Some skills proposed in the literature are not just too general; they are also vague. The following skills sampled from a state document (Georgia Department of Education, 1968) are symptomatic:

> Finds success in all handwriting activities (p. 58).
>
> Understands that writing is a tool of communication (p. 77).

Such enigmatic skills require more precise delineation.

The Collection of Skills

All suggested skills were collected as available resources were reviewed (see bibliography). Each broad skill (e.g., "Writes a persuasive paragraph") was analyzed to identify the component skills (e.g., "States a point of view") that are appropriate at increasing levels of difficulty (see the specifications for the writing samples for Discourse Products in the LSF in Humes, Cronnell, Lawlor, Gentry, and Fieker, forthcoming). Each vague skill was translated, when possible, into language that more precisely delineates an assessable skill.

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*The writing types here are the traditional categories of descriptive writing, narrative writing, expository writing, and persuasive writing. While other categorizations have been hypothesized in recent years (e.g., Kinneavy, 1971), the traditional types have been used here because they are familiar and acceptable to a larger audience, and because they reflect most current textbook instruction.

In general, the skill statements were cast in terminology that is used both by many language arts authorities and by competency lists when these sources discuss or enumerate specific skills. Using the same terminology facilitates comparing the LSF skills with those on external lists. Thus particular skills in a school district's curriculum can be matched with skill statements in the LSF. However, such skill statements generally must be defined more precisely by further explication in order to be directly interpretable for either assessment or instruction. (This precision was subsequently accomplished by skill specifications in Humes et al., forthcoming; these specifications provide a detailed description of each skill in relation to current instructional practices.)

This collection of skills deriving from the literature and from competency lists was then compared with skills derived from the data available on language-arts textbook series, and any duplicated skills were deleted. These textbook data were originally processed for the SWRL Proficiency Verification Systems (PVS) for Language Arts (Humes, 1978) and for Spelling (Cronnell, 1978). PVS Language Arts and PVS Spelling are content-sensitive assessment systems that parallel the actual instruction that is presented in students' textbooks. To collect the data page-by-page task analysis is performed on textbooks (see Appendix A) to determine the content of the instruction and the performance modes of the practice. Computer processing of this data produces lists of content by grade level. Consequently, a large data base is available that describes actual textbook (and therefore classroom) instruction in detail.

The skills collection included heavy representation of form skills.* Language-arts academicians frequently de-emphasize form skills, some even to the point of suggesting that most are irrelevant, as is implied by this recommended objective: "To write freely without excessive attention to form other than beginning with a capital and ending with a terminal" (Hansen and others, 1970, p. 12).

Conversely, some theorists advocate these skills as essential prerequisites of written discourse. Rentel, King, and Pappas (1979) believe, for example, that spelling enhances students' writing ability because "greater proportions of lexical cohesion can be expected in writing[,] for the ability to spell a word will increase the likelihood that it will be used to create cohesive ties and thereby structure" (p. 3).

State and local competency lists also stress form skills. Furthermore, textbooks emphasize them, particularly in assessment, perhaps because they are so adaptable to selected-response formats. This competency-list and textbook focus alone justifies the inclusion of a high proportion of form skills on any list that represents school requirements.

The Critical Skills

The comprehensive list was then screened for essential skills according to three criteria:

1) The appearance on state or local competency lists validates a skill's importance to educators who construct such lists.
2) Textbook emphasis on a skill verifies its importance to successful performance in the classroom.

*Form skills include the skills of handwriting, mechanics, spelling, grammar, and usage.

3) A skill that is prerequisite to skills at a higher grade level is critical--if students are expected to write a paragraph at a specific grade level, they must be able to write sentences at the previous level.

Skills that meet these criteria were retained on the list.* The following are exceptions to the deletion/retention criteria:

1) Skills that are more appropriately categorized as reading rather than as writing skills were deleted even though they are presented in language arts textbooks; e.g., use of multiple-meaning words, homographs, dictionaries, reference sources. Such skills are included in the Reading component of the LSF (Fiege-Kollmann, 1979) and need not be assessed twice.

2) Some skills were retained in the list because they are important component skills of writing products that do meet the criteria; e.g., use of rhythm because of its importance for poetry.

3) A few skills not consistently present on competency lists were retained because significant textbook space is devoted to their instruction; e.g., the use of metaphor.

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*Some skills are emphasized by language-arts scholars but appear only sporadically in textbooks and competency lists (e.g., many sentence-pattern skills). These skills were not retained. A very few "minor" skills were retained for purposes of the bilingual project because a student who lacks these skills can be identified as a non-native speaker of English; e.g., the use of a/an vs. the.

After the above criteria for skills inclusion were applied to the comprehensive collection of skills, the list was reduced to approximately 180 different skills. These skills are commonly taught in textbooks, are required on state competency lists, and/or are component skills of other critical skills. Based on the analyses described above, these are the skills that students are expected to learn in grades K-6. Thus they are important for assessment to determine students' competence in the K-6 curriculum.

GRADE LEVELS

After the list was revised according to the criteria above, the remaining skills were assigned grade levels. The previous literature search had proffered some considerations from scholars and from competency lists. However, various problems occur when authorities designate grade levels. Some language arts authorities do not assign grade levels to skills because they feel that sequencing is the local school district's prerogative.* Other authorities designate cuts in sequencing in blocks such as K-3 rather than in grades.* Still other sources sequence skills objectives without presenting evidence to validate their ordering; the lists appear to be devised subjectively from the authors' experience in their own classrooms.

A different kind of problem is posed by sources that list skills for multiple grade levels without noting the criteria that differentiate

*This is a reasonable position, but not for the bilingual project because specific grade levels were required.

performance among grade levels. The following (Los Angeles City Schools, 1964) is such an example:

> Grade 3 Writes short stories and/or poetry. (p. 54)
>
> Grade 4 Writes stories and poetry. (p. 68)
>
> Grade 5 Writes stories, plays, and poetry. (p. 92)

The lack of differentiating criteria here is conducive to an invalid assumption--that a story acceptable at grade three is just as acceptable at grade five. (When skills are listed at more than one grade level in the LSF, the skill specifications--Humes et al., forthcoming--detail the differentiating criteria.)

This repetition of skills may be one of the factors responsible for the problem of variation in the grade levels designated for skills. Considerable grade level variation is found across state and local competency lists. Figure 1 (based on Lawlor, 1979) illustrates this variation across seven states in terms of both the grade levels and the "critical" skills. Information on these skills was compiled from representative state documents. Such lists generally place skills at higher levels than are justified by their appearance in textbook instruction. Assigning high grade levels may represent an attempt to ensure that all students can meet the competency standards. Although the grade levels may be placed high when graduation requirements are the consideration, actual instruction on the skills occurs earlier, and students must acquire the skills at these earlier grade levels in order to function effectively in the classroom.

Figure 1. Sample of Critical Skills and Grade Levels of Skills across States

SKILLS AT THE WORD/PHRASE LEVEL	GRADE LEVEL FOR ASSESSMENT					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
SPELLING						
Suffixes						
1. Spells plurals of nouns by adding -s.		F,G	L,O			
2. Spells plurals of nouns by adding -es.		F,G	O		L	
3. Spells verbs with -ing.	G		TX,O	L		
4. Spells past tense forms of verbs with -ed ending.	G		O			L
5. Spells new words by adding derivational suffixes.					G	TN,G
Suffixation Processes						
1. Spells new words by changing y to i when adding suffixes.			G			
2. Spells new words by dropping final e when adding suffixes.				O		L,TX
3. Spells new words by doubling the final consonant when adding suffixes.				O	G	TX

NOTE: F = Florida G = Georgia L = Louisiana M = Michigan
O = Oklahoma TN = Tennessee TX = Texas

Grade-level variation also occurs between authorities' designations and textbook presentation. This discrepancy is confirmed by Golub and others (1971), who analyzed differences between language arts books for teachers and textbook series for students. Golub surveyed four books written by eminent language arts scholars, outlining the scholars' consensus of important skills and their sequencing. He then outlined the instruction in four 1960's language arts textbook series. Golub sequenced the skills according to the modal grade level at which the series presented each skill. His outline unfortunately does not indicate how many of the four series covered a listed skill; the data may represent as many as four series or as few as one. The disparity between experts and actual instruction is displayed in Figure 2. This figure compares punctuation and sentence pattern skills for grade levels of (1) Golub's consensus of authorities, (2) the textbooks he examined (modal level), and (3) the textbooks analyzed for the previously described PVS data. The PVS designation reflects the grade level at which most or usually all analyzed series present (or have presented) the skill. This designation may or may not be the modal level; usually it is not. For example, if four series out of seven present a skill at fourth grade and three series present the skill at fifth grade, the skill is designated for assessment at fifth grade to ensure the greatest probability that the skill is learned by the grade level of assessment.

Because the grade levels reported in the literature and by the competency lists are inconsistent and often do not parallel the actual level of textbook instruction, grade levels stipulated for writing

Figure 2. Variation of Grade-Level Designation

	Grade Level for Assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Punctuation						
Uses period to end a declarative sentence.	A	G, X				
Uses question mark to end an interrogative sentence.		A, G, X				
Uses exclamation point to end an exclamatory sentence.			G	X, A		
Uses period at the end of abbreviations.		G	A	X		
Uses comma after direct address.				G	X	A
Uses apostrophe in contractions.		G	A		X	
Sentence Patterns						
Uses NV pattern.	A		G, X			
Uses NVN pattern.		A		X	G	

Note:

A = Authorities' listing in Golub's (1971) survey

G = Golub's (1971) grade-level listing by modal appearance in 1-4 textbook series

X = Listing from SWRL PVS data by grade level at which most or all textbooks present or have presented the skill

skills of the Language Skills Framework derive from the SWRL PVS textbook data, which comprise the most complete, current, and extensive set of information available about instructional practices and grade-level sequencing. If students must function in the English classroom, the actual activities occurring there are the important criteria of success in that classroom: The most reliable data available on what happens in the classroom are the textbooks actually used. According to a study conducted by the Educational Products Information Exchange Institute (1976), investigators in on-site observations noted that 90% of what is done in classrooms can be attributed to commercially prepared materials; for the same study, teachers themselves reported that such materials generally accounted for 90% or more of their instructional time.

Most LSF skills were assigned a single grade-level designation because this practice corresponds with instruction--formal instruction is generally complete at a certain grade level and/or the skill is required for advanced instruction at the next higher grade level. Different degrees of proficiency for each skill at each grade level could sometimes be suggested, but this policy is impractical for most assessment purposes.*

THE SKILLS FRAMEWORK

After grade levels were specified, the skills were organized by categories into a framework of writing skills. This framework is

*Occasionally skills have been designated for assessment at more than one grade level in the LSF. For these instances, the skill specifications (Humes et al., forthcoming) detail the differentiating criteria for judging mastery of the skill at the particular grade level.

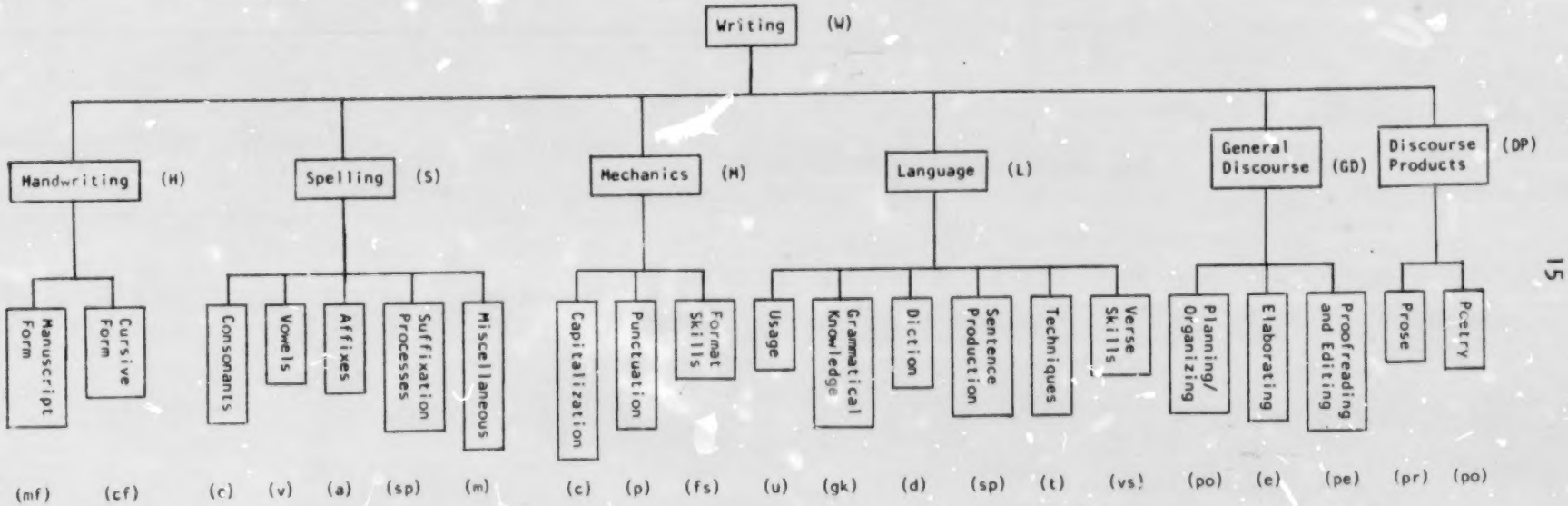
presented in Appendix B. Figure 3 is a diagram of the framework, illustrating its major skill areas.

The framework consists of six major skill areas, ranging from most basic to most complex: Handwriting, Spelling, Mechanics, Language, General Discourse, and Discourse Products. Each of these six skill areas is further divided into 2-6 subareas under which individual skills are listed. The skill areas are discussed below.

Handwriting. This skill area covers the basic motor skills of writing essential for further progress in the composing process. Handwriting skills are divided into two subareas, Cursive Form and Manuscript Form.

Spelling. This area entails the various skills needed to produce correctly spelled words. The ability to spell correctly permits students to use a greater variety of words in their writing and thus produce compositions more likely to be judged as effectively written. For precise diagnosis and assessment, the skills focus on the spellings for specific sounds, although it is understood that good spelling requires the production of whole words as used in connected discourse. The skills in this area may overlap with what can be called "word-building" or even "vocabulary" skills; this is especially the case with affix skills. However, since all the skills result in correctly spelled words and are most precisely tested by formats for spelling assessment, their categorization in this skill area is appropriate as well as convenient. The subareas of spelling include Consonants, Vowels, Affixes, Suffixation Processes, and Miscellaneous (the subarea under which are categorized such spellings as irregular words, compounds, and homophones).

Figure 3. Diagram of Language Skills Framework for Writing



Note: Letters in parentheses are codes for skill identification in Humes et al. (forthcoming).

Mechanics. This skill area includes various skills for using graphic devices that are conventionally required to make written products more readable. Considerable textbook instruction is devoted to mechanics, perhaps because this area is relatively straightforward to teach and to test. (To facilitate assessment, some mechanics skills have been combined for assessment; see Humes et al., forthcoming, for details.) The Mechanics category consists of three subareas: Capitalization, Punctuation, and Format Skills. Format Skills are mechanics skills that relate to the general form of a writing product. Some format skills are required to produce all writing products, e.g., margins, paragraph indentation. Other format skills are used only for specific types of writing, especially for the writing of letters. In fact, letters are primarily defined by their format rather than by their content (although good content is essential to effective letter writing).

Language. This skill area includes a variety of subareas of skills relating to the use of words, phrases, clauses, and individual sentences (skills relating to units larger than the sentence are primarily treated under General Discourse). The subareas include Usage, Grammatical Knowledge, Diction, Sentence Production, Techniques (e.g., the use of figurative comparisons), and Verse Skills.

General Discourse. This area encompasses many skills required to compose effective written products. Many of the listed skills are required for all discourse products. Some skills may be important, but either optional or not relevant to a particular product. Other skills are required for specific types of writing, e.g., narration, exposition,

This skill area is divided into three subareas: Planning/Organizing, Elaborating, and Proofreading and Editing.* Planning entails acquisition of the content for writing: discovering, selecting, and locating ideas/content. Organizing involves imposing order on generated ideas/content. Elaborating is the primary act of composing a written product. The concomitant skills consist of those required to expand the organized content appropriately and to produce discourse that conveys the organized ideas, using appropriate devices and techniques. Proofreading and Editing covers both revising and refining skills. Revising involves assessing, changing, and amending the content, organization, and elaboration of the written product. Refining involves making small but significant changes in the written product to enhance comprehensibility and to add style and individuality.

Discourse Products. The result of the composing process is an actual discourse product--a composition, a story, a theme, an essay, a poem, etc. (all of which may be of various lengths, ranging from a paragraph/stanza to a book, although only shorter forms--usually one to five paragraphs--are required at the elementary level).

Textbooks cover a wide variety of discourse products; see Figure 4 for an enumeration of various specific written forms (genres) commonly

*These divisions reflect a sequencing of the composing process, a sequencing in which a skill in one subarea is implemented prior to a skill in the next. Good writers commonly use the skills of two or more subareas at once because these skills occur and recur simultaneously in independent writing. However, the subareas are commonly treated separately to facilitate instruction and assessment. This separation--like all the separation of categories in the LSF--is not meant to imply that students must use (or even learn) the skills separately; rather, assessment and consequent diagnosis are most effectively and efficiently implemented when skills are separated, as they are here.

found in textbooks.* Obviously, assessment instruments cannot efficiently measure so many specific written forms. Moreover, assessment problems are posed by the considerable variation in the appearance of these forms across textbooks because each specific form has certain literary characteristics as critical attributes. For instance, fables, fairy tales, myths, legends, and tall tales all involve some kind of contrary-to-fact content, yet each specific form has its own unique requirements for production (e.g., fables generally have morals; elementary-textbook myths commonly involve gods and goddesses). Thus assessing these specific written forms requires assessing student knowledge of literary characteristics unique to each product type. If the textbooks that are used in the classroom do not present that product, students cannot be expected to know its literary characteristics. Therefore, it is questionable whether such knowledge, despite its value, should be evidenced by students as an indication of their writing ability rather than of their knowledge of literary characteristics.

Because of the reasons above and because assessment of literary knowledge is provided for by the LSF for reading (Fiege-Kollmann, 1973), knowledge of the characteristics of specific written forms is not included in the LSF for writing. Rather, these products have been generalized for the Writing LSF. Generalizing these products eliminates the need to assess knowledge of the critical literary attributes of

*Even these specific forms have been generalized; e.g., the expository form "Explanations" covers such tasks such as "Explain how to do/make something," "Explain how something works," etc.

Figure 4. Specific written forms assessed by Discourse Products in the LSF.

Thank-you notes (content, not format) Descriptive journals Riddles Character sketches Descriptive essays Personal letters (descriptive content, not format) Miscellaneous short descriptions	Writes a description.
Personal narratives Biographies Autobiographies Historical accounts Personal letters (narrative content, not format) Miscellaneous short narratives (straightline)	Writes a straightline narrative.
Adventure stories Science fiction Fables Fairy tales Animal tales Myths Legends Tall tales Plays Miscellaneous short stories (climactic)	Writes a short climactic narrative.
Comparisons/Contrasts Explanations Analyses Informative book reports Record-keeping journals (content, not format) Business letters (expository content, not format)	Writes an expository composition.
Letters to editor (content, not format) Editorials Critical book reviews Media reviews Newspaper advertisements Radio/television commercials Persuasive essays	Writes a persuasive composition.
Notices (content, not format) Announcements (content, not format) Invitations Telephone messages (content, not format) Newspaper stories (content, not format) Personal letters (format, not content)	Writes an invitation in the form of a personal letter.
Letters to editor (format, not content) Business letters	Writes a business letter.
Odes Pastorals Occasional verse Haiku (content, not form) Cinquain (content, not form) Light verse (descriptive content) Limericks (for descriptive elements) Miscellaneous descriptive poems	Writes a short descriptive poem.
Ballads Short epics Limericks (for narrative elements) Miscellaneous narrative poems	Writes a short narrative poem.

Note: The specific written forms (on the left of each column) are those commonly found in instruction; the generalized Discourse Products (on the right) are included in the LSF. The skills required for these products are listed and described in the skills specifications (Humes et al, forthcoming).

any specific form, yet provides for the assessment of skills critical to all forms of the particular discourse type (e.g., the narrative-writing skills used to produce all the previously referenced narrative forms--fables, fairy tales, myths, legends, and tall tales--are assessed for the skill "Writes a climactic narrative"). Over fifty specific forms have been collapsed into nine general skills, which are also shown in Figure 4.

Additionally, assessment of these generalized skills provides the opportunity for assessing students' actual writing ability because writing samples are elicited--actual compositions written by students. Each writing sample assesses (1) the content skills of the discourse type, (2) content skills that apply across discourse types (General Discourse Skills), and (3) the form skills (derived from the Handwriting, Spelling, Mechanics, and Language areas) that must be used to compose a quality product. Thus the discourse products assessed by the writing samples provide a general description of students' writing ability, while the skills in the other areas of the Writing LSF provide more detailed information on students' competence in specific aspects of writing.

The skills for producing Discourse Products are divided into two subareas, Prose and Poetry. Prose discourse products include compositions in the four traditional discourse modes: description, narration (subdivided into straightline and climactic narration),* exposition,

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*Narrative discourse (i.e., stories) is heavily emphasized in the elementary schools; however, the other discourse types are particularly important for the development of writing ability.

and persuasion. In addition, prose discourse products include two letter-writing skills (writing personal and business letters), each of which has production of format characteristics as a critical attribute. A number of different specific poetry products are frequently included in elementary instruction; however, the generalized skills that can be assessed to cover component skills common to all such specific products can be subsumed under two categories: "Writes a descriptive poem" and "Writes a narrative poem."

THE HIERARCHY

To present writing skills in a display that more closely parallels instruction as it occurs in textbooks, the framework of skills was reorganized into a hierarchy of skills based on the linguistic units utilized by instruction.

First the literature was examined for information on feasible designs and appropriate models. However, skills lists from the literature rarely establish hierarchies of skills that illuminate interrelationships among writing skills. The few available hierarchies may detail adequately the straightforward form-skill areas such as spelling; however, they fail to display interconnections among the composing tasks: They ignore the subskills of content (for both general discourse and the specific product type) underlying skills such as "Writes an explanation." The hierarchy illustrated below (Dawson and Dingee, 1966) is exceptional in its display of general subskills, but the structure ties them to a specific skill; it does not show how they may relate to other composing skills.

A. Types

1. Letters

a. Informal notes
b. Friendly letters
c. Business letters

2. What to observe

a. Content

(1) Organization

(a) Sequence of ideas
(b) Good beginning sentence
(c) Good closing sentence (p. 205)

In this hierarchy, a component skill must be relisted each time it pertains to another larger skill. For example, "Good beginning sentence" detailed here must also be specified under tasks such as "Writes an explanation" or "Writes an editorial." Such repetition makes the hierarchy unduly long and cumbersome.

An appropriate and efficient hierarchy of writing skills should include the component skills relevant to any writing task as well as display relationships among skills. It should also avoid repetition of skills. The hierarchy displayed in Appendix C meets these criteria. Figure 5 is a diagram of the hierarchy, illustrating its levels and major skill areas. The assignment of specific skills from the framework to the various levels is explained below.

Word-Part Level. Skills that are instructionally prerequisite to the production of a whole unaffixed word are listed at the Word-Part Level. They include skills listed in the framework for Handwriting and Spelling.

Word/Phrase Level. Skills that are generally taught in a subsentence context are listed at this level. They include skills listed in the framework for Handwriting, Spelling, Mechanics, and Language.

Sentence Level. Skills that generally require the context of a complete sentence for the student to comprehend and/or perform a task are listed at the sentence level. Some skills are assigned to this level for assessment expediency. For example, a student might distinguish between an adjective or adverb in a sub-sentence context, but the sentence provides a frame that facilitates identification. The skills are from the Handwriting, Spelling, Mechanics, and Language sections of the framework.

Paragraph Level. Skills that entail more context than a sentence but less than a whole composition are classified here. This category includes skills of any context that physically appears to be a section of a whole. An example of the latter type is correct placement of the inside address of a business letter in relation to the letter's other parts. Also assigned to this level are verse skills that require a context of two or more lines to be discerned; e.g., end rhyme. The skills at the Paragraph Level are from the Mechanics, Language, and General Discourse sections of the framework.

General Discourse Level. Listed at the General Discourse Level are skills required to compose a discrete text. The writing

process skills from the General Discourse section of the framework are included here as well as one skill from the Mechanics section, "Uses margins." Many of the listed skills are required for all discourse products. Some skills may be important, but either optional or not relevant to a particular product. Other skills are required for specific types of writing, e.g., narration, exposition.

Discourse Products Level. Skills at this level are those skills that result in a complete poetry or prose product. They incorporate the skills from the Products section of the Framework.

The hierarchy displays skills at higher levels that are dependent upon or incorporate as subskills those skills listed at lower levels: Students spell sounds in preparation for spelling whole words; write words in preparation for writing sentences; write sentences before they write paragraphs; write paragraphs before they write whole compositions.

The grade-level designation in the hierarchy's display facilitates locating the specific skills relevant to a task at a particular grade level. The most important dependencies are found within the Discourse Products, which are assessed by writing samples. Effective, quality writing cannot be judged only as a piece of discourse; rather, the total is, in part, the sum of its pieces. That is, skills at the Word-Part Level, the Word/Phrase Level, the Sentence Level, the Paragraph Level, and the General Discourse Level all contribute to the final writing product.* For example, to determine the component skills relevant to a fifth-grade writing sample for the Discourse Products skill "Writes

*The relationships of individual skills to the total writing product are described in detail in the specifications for the writing samples for each Discourse Products skill (Humes et al., 1979), which includes scoring keys and scoring guides (cf. Humes, 1979) that incorporate skills from all hierarchical levels.

Figure 5. Diagram of Skills Hierarchy

an expository composition," the test constructor identifies all the relevant skills at that grade level and at grades below. He/she refers first to the immediately preceding hierarchical level, General Discourse, for the relevant skills. Then he/she moves to lower hierarchy levels to locate other component skills of the task. Thus the component skills identified for writing an expository composition at fifth grade include the following:

Includes factual content: part-whole relationships.

Uses logical order: procedural order.*

Uses transitional expressions to link sentences of a paragraph: logical expressions.

Limits a paragraph to one main idea.

Uses a topic sentence.

Uses supporting sentences for a topic sentence.

Uses precise language.

Uses relevant form skills for grades K-4 at the Word-Part, Word/Phrase, and Sentence Levels.**

Less complex tasks usually entail fewer skills at fewer levels. For example, at the Sentence Level, the skill "Spells homophones" is dependent upon the following component skills from lower levels for the homophone pair beats-beets.

Spells plurals by adding -s or -es.

Spells consonant sounds: initial, final.

Spells vowel digraphs (ee and ea).

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*The type of logical ordering is determined by the grade-level content to be ordered.

**Space limitations preclude listing all the relevant form skills that can be identified from the hierarchy.

LIMITATIONS OF THE HIERARCHY AND THE FRAMEWORK

The hierarchy should not be interpreted as a rigid structure in which all skills at one level must be mastered before learning occurs at another level. In actual practice, learning takes place at many levels simultaneously. Furthermore, this dependency relationship is partial, not complete. For example, spelling words is possible with poor letter formation; well constructed sentences can contain poorly spelled words; discourse can be written with inadequate mechanics and language techniques. Thus mastery of a skill at one level does not necessarily predict mastery of skills at another "previous" level, since not all skills at one level are mastered before skills are learned at the next level. This restriction applies as well to the framework; e.g., not all skills in the Handwriting area are learned before students learn skills in the next area, Spelling.

The framework and hierarchy present only two of the possible displays of skills. Depending on a researcher's theoretical orientation and/or on the practical application of the resulting design, different frameworks could be developed. Correspondingly, the present framework and hierarchy most closely match the content of instruction and current approaches to both instruction and assessment. The framework and hierarchy are not prescriptive; other frameworks and hierarchies may better delineate what skills should be taught. Rather, they are descriptive devices that present what is taught--what is most commonly found in textbooks being used in elementary school classrooms today. Thus they are the most appropriate displays for describing criteria for assessing students' writing skills.

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APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

HANDWRITING	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Manuscript Form						
1. Copies numbers.	X					
2. Writes first and last name.	X					
3. Copies sentences.	X					
4. Writes sentences from dictation.	X					
5. Writes connected text legibly.		X				
Cursive Form						
1. Writes first and last name.			X			
2. Copies sentences.			X			
3. Writes sentences from dictation.			X			
4. Writes connected text legibly.				X		

APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

SPELLING	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consonants						
1. Spells consonant sounds:						
a. initial:						
i. /b/-b, /d/-d, /f/-f, /g/-g, /h/-h, /j/-j, /k/-k, /k/-c, /l/-l, /m/-m, /n/-n, /p/-p, /r/-r, /s/-s, /t/-t, /v/-v, /w/-w, /y/-y, /z/-z.	X					
ii. /f/-ph, /j/-g, /kw/-qu, /n/-kn, /r/-wr, /s/-c.					X	
b. medial: doubled consonants between vowels.				X		
c. final:						
i. /b/-b, /d/-d, /g/-g, /m/-m, /n/-n, /p/-p, /t/-t.	X					
ii. /ks/-x, /f/-ff, /k/-ck, /l/-ll, /s/-ss.		X				
iii. /f/-ph, /j/-ge, /j/-dge, /m/-mb, /s/-ce.					X	
2. Spells consonant clusters:						
a. initial: bl, br, cl, cr, dr, fl, fr, gl, gr, pl, pr, sc, sk, sm, sn, sp, st, sw, tr, tw.		X				
b. final: ct, ft, ld, lk, lp, lt, mp, nd, nt, sk, st.		X				
3. Spells consonant digraphs: /ch/-ch, /ng/-ng, /sh/-sh, /th/, /th/-th, /hw/-wh.		X				

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

SPELLING (continued)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Spells one-letter vowels:						
a. /ă/-a, /ĕ/-e, /ĭ/-i, /ŏ/-o, /ŭ/-u.	X					
b. /ē/-e, /ī/-y.		X				
c. /ô/-a, /ô/-o, /o͝o/-u, /ō/-o.				X		
d. /u/-o, /ī/-i.					X	
2. Spells vowel digraphs:						
a. /ā/-ai, /ā/-ay, /ē/-ea, /ē/-ee, /ō/-oa, /ō/-ow, /o͞o/-oo, /o͝o/-oo.		X				
b. /ī/-ie, /ī/-igh, /o͞o/-ue, /o͞o/, /yo͞o/-ew, /oi/-oi, /oi/-oy, /ou/-ou, /ou/-ow.				X		
c. /e/-ea, /ô/-au, /ô/-augh, /ô/-aw, /ô/-ough, /u/-ou.					X	
3. Spells vowel-consonant-e pattern:						
a. /ā/-a...e, /ī/-i...e, /ō/-o...e.		X				
b. /ē/-e...e, /u/-o...e, /o͞o/, /yo͞o/-u...e.						X
4. Spells vowel-r pattern:						
a. /är/-ar, /ôr/-or.			X			
b. /er/-are, /er/-air, /er/-ear, /ėr/-er, /ėr/-ir, /ėr/-ur, /ėr/-or, /ir/-ear, /ôr/-ore.				X		
5. Spells schwa sound (/ə/).						X
6. Spells endings with schwa: /ər/ endings: ar, er, or; /əl/ endings: al, el, le.						X

APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

SPELLING (continued)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Affixes						
1. Spells plurals by adding -s or -es.		X				
2. Spells verb forms by adding -s, -es, -ed, -ing: one-syllable verbs requiring no changes.			X			
3. Spells new words by adding suffixes:						
a. -ly, -er, -est.				X		
b. -age, -al, -ance, -ar, -ful, -ion, -less, -ment, -ness, -or, -y.						X
4. Spells new words by adding prefixes: a-, dis-, ex-, re-, un-.					X	
Suffixation Processes						
1. Spells plurals by changing f or fe to v and adding -es.				X		
2. Spells new words by changing y to i when adding certain suffixes.*				X		
3. Spells new words by dropping final e when adding certain suffixes.*				X		
4. Spells new words by doubling the final consonant when adding certain suffixes.*				X		
5. Spells new words by changing the spelling of the root word when adding certain suffixes: be to pt, d(e) to s, er to r, t to ss, y to ic.						X
Miscellaneous						
1. Spells irregular words.				X		
2. Spells compound words.				X		
3. Spells homophones.*				X		X

*Appropriate grade-level content was subsequently included in the skill specifications (see Humes, et al., forthcoming).

APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

MECHANICS	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Capitalization						
1. Capitalizes names of persons and the personal pronoun I.		X				
2. Capitalizes first word of sentence.		X				
3. Capitalizes months, days, streets, cities, states, special days or holidays, countries, non-personal proper names.			X			
4. Capitalizes salutation and complimentary closing of a letter.			X			
5. Capitalizes first letter in personal titles: Mr., Miss, Mrs., Ms., Dr.			X			
6. Capitalizes initials in names of persons, and abbreviations for days, months, and streets.				X		
7. Capitalizes first word in dialogue quotations.				X		
Punctuation						
1. Uses period to end a sentence:						
a. declarative.		X				
b. imperative.				X		
2. Uses question mark to end an interrogative sentence.		X				
3. Uses exclamation point to end an exclamatory sentence.				X		
4. Uses comma:						
a. when writing the date.*				X		
b. between city and state.*				X		

*Although the asterisked punctuation skills are relevant to personal letters, they are taught later than letters; thus they should not be considered in the letter-writing assessment for third grade.

APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

MECHANICS (continued)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. to separate items in a series.				X		
d. with direct address.					X	
5. Uses periods at the end of abbreviations and initials.				X		
6. Punctuates salutation and complimentary closing of a letter:						
a. personal.			X			
b. business.					X	
7. Uses apostrophe:						
a. in possessive forms:						
i. singular.				X		
ii. plural.					X	
b. in contractions.					X	
8. Uses comma, terminal punctuation, and quotation marks in dialogue quotations.					X	
Format Skills						
1. Indents first word of a paragraph.		X				
2. Uses margins.		X				
3. Fills in blanks of forms with personal information (e.g., name, birthday): heading of standardized test.			X			
4. Includes the parts of a letter:						
a. personal letter.			X			
b. business letter.					X	

APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

MECHANICS (continued)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Places letter parts correctly:						
a. personal letter.			X			
b. business letter.					X	
6. Includes all elements of address and return address on envelope.			X			
7. Places address and return address in the correct space on an envelope.			X			
8. Uses dialogue for only one speaker in a paragraph.					X	

APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

LANGUAGE	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Usage						
1. Distinguishes noun forms:						
a. singular/plural.			X			
b. proper/common.				X		
2. Uses articles appropriately:						
a. a vs. an.			X			
b. a, an, vs. the.				X		
3. Recognizes correct word order:						
a. subject-verb.	X					
b. subject-verb-object.		X				
c. subject-verb-object-phrase.			X			
4. Uses sentences in which the subject and verb agree:						
a. subject and verb adjacent.				X		
b. subject and verb separate.					X	
c. verb before subject.						X
5. Relates sentences by transformation:						
a. declarative ↔ interrogative:						
i. inversion.			X			
ii. do support.				X		
b. declarative ↔ imperative.					X	
6. Uses pronouns appropriately:						
a. nominative forms vs. objective forms after verbs.				X		
b. nominative forms vs. objective forms after prepositions.					X	

APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

LANGUAGE (continued)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Uses verbs appropriately:						
a. regular vs. irregular forms.			X			
b. past vs. past participle forms.					X	
8. Uses adjectives appropriately: comparative vs. superlative.				X		
9. Uses adverbs appropriately: comparative vs. superlative.				X		
Grammatical Knowledge						
1. Identifies sentence type:						
a. declarative and interrogative.			X			
b. exclamatory.				X		
c. imperative.				X		
2. Identifies parts of sentences:						
a. subject and predicate:						
i. one word.				X		
ii. phrase.					X	
b. direct object.						X
c. prepositional phrase and object of preposition.						X
3. Identifies parts of speech.					X	
4. Identifies sentences as opposed to fragments.					X	
5. Identifies run-on sentences.					X	
6. Distinguishes between main and subordinate clauses.						X

APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

LANGUAGE (continued)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Diction						
1. Uses specific rather than general terms (descriptive writing).			X			
2. Uses synonyms and antonyms.			X			
3. Uses terms that convey emotions.			X			
4. Uses sensory terms.			X			
5. Uses precise language (expository writing).				X		
Sentence Production						
1. Constructs a variety of sentence structures:						
a. simple sentence.		X				
b. compound sentence.					X	
c. complex sentence.						X
2. Expands sentences:						
a. with words.			X			
b. with phrases.					X	
c. with subordinate clauses.						X
3. Combines sentences to form sentences with coordinate noun and verb phrases.						X
Techniques						
1. Uses transitional expressions to link sentences:						
a. chronological expressions.					X	
b. spatial expressions.					X	
c. logical expressions.					X	

APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

LANGUAGE (continued)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Uses figurative comparisons:						
a. simile.				X		
b. metaphor.					X	
Verse Skills						
1. Uses verse form:						
a. couplet.				X		
b. stanza.					X	
2. Uses end rhyme.				X		
3. Uses unrhymed verse.				X		
4. Uses rhythm.					X	

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

GENERAL DISCOURSE	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Planning/Organizing						
1. Selects an appropriate topic when given a general subject.				X		
2. Writes notes on a topic.						X
3. Constructs a topic outline.						X
4. Uses chronological order.		X				
5. Uses logical order:						
a. procedural order.				X		
b. order of importance.					X	
c. comparison/contrast order.						X
6. Uses spatial order.					X	
7. Uses beginning, body, and end paragraphs.						X
8. Uses narrative organization: Combines beginning, middle, and ending of a story.			X			
Elaborating						
1. General elaborating:						
a. Elaborates paragraphs:						
i. Adds details to a paragraph.			X			
ii. Limits a paragraph to one main idea.				X		
iii. Constructs introductory/ beginning sentence for a paragraph.				X		
iv. Uses a topic sentence for a paragraph.					X	
v. Uses supporting statements for a topic sentence.					X	

APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

GENERAL DISCOURSE (continued)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Writes titles.*			X			
c. Uses connotative language to affect audience.						X
d. Uses appropriate formal/ informal language.						X
e. Summarizes information.						X
f. Constructs a composition from a topic outline.						X
g. Constructs a bibliography.						X
2. Discourse-type elaborating:						
a. Elaborates for descriptive writing: Includes appropriate descriptive attributes.			X			
b. Elaborates for narrative writing:						
i. Includes events appropriate for a straightline narrative.		X				
ii. Includes events appropriate for a climactic narrative.				X		
iii. Includes simple characters.				X		
iv. Completes an open-ended story.			X			
c. Elaborates for expository writing:						
i. Includes factual content:						
(a) information on what, where, when content.			X			
(b) procedural steps.				X		
(c) part/whole relationships.					X	

*Format skills of title writing are not assessed.

APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

GENERAL DISCOURSE (continued)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
(d) comparisons/contrasts.						X
d. Elaborates for persuasive writing:						
i. States a point of view.						X
ii. Includes arguments for a point of view.						X
iii. Includes supporting evidence for arguments.						X
e. Elaborates for a letter:						
i. Includes request in a letter of invitation.			X			
ii. Includes content appropriate for a business letter.						X
Proofreading and Editing						
1. Proofreads for final copy.*			X	X	X	X
2. Separates long sentences by deleting and.			X			
3. Varies the structure and length of sentences in discourse.						X
4. Removes unrelated sentences.					X	
5. Removes redundancy.					X	
6. Rewords text to avoid word repetition:						
a. Substitutes pronouns for nouns.					X	
b. Substitutes synonyms for over-used terms.						X
7. Removes ungrammatical language.						X

*The content for assessment at each grade level consists of skills assessed at the preceding grade level.

APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS FRAMEWORK

DISCOURSE PRODUCTS	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Prose*						
1. Writes a description.			X	X	X	
2. Writes a straightline narrative.		X	X			
3. Writes a short climactic narrative.				X	X	
4. Writes an expository composition.				X	X	X
5. Writes a persuasive composition.						X
6. Writes an invitation in the form of a personal letter.			X			
7. Writes a business letter.						X
Poetry						
1. Writes a short descriptive poem.				X		
2. Writes a short narrative poem.					X	

*Grade level differences for skills listed at more than one level are reflected in the subskills, stimulus, and scoring of the writing sample.

APPENDIX C

HIERARCHY OF WRITING SKILLS

I. SKILLS AT THE WORD-PART LEVEL	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. HANDWRITING						
1. Manuscript						
a. Copies numbers.	X					
B. SPELLING						
1. Consonants						
a. Spells consonant sounds:						
i. initial:						
(a) /b/-b, /d/-d, /f/-f, /g/-g, /h/-h, /j/-j, /k/-k, /k/-c, /l/-l, /m/-m, /n/-n, /p/-p, /r/-r, /s/-s, /t/-t, /v/-v, /w/-w, /y/-y, /z/-z.	X					
(b) /f/-ph, /j/-g, /kw/-qu. /n/-kn, /r/-wr, /s/-c.					X	
ii. medial: doubled consonants between vowels.				X		
iii. final:						
(a) /b/-b, /d/-d, /g/-g, /m/-m, /n/-n, /p/-p, /t/-t.	X					
(b) /ks/-x, /f/-ff, /k/-ck, /l/-ll, /s/-ss.		X				
(c) /f/-ph, /j/-ge, /j/-dge, /m/-mb, /s/-ce.					X	
b. Spells consonant clusters:						
i. initial: bl, br, cl, cr, dr, fl, fr, gl, gr, pl, pr, sc, sk, sm, sn, sp, st, sw, tr, tw.		X				
ii. final: ct, ft, ld, lk, lp, lt, mp, nd, nt, sk, st.		X				
c. Spells consonant digraphs: /ch/-ch, /ng/-ng, /sh/-sh, /th/, /th/-th /hw/-wh.		X				

I. SKILLS AT THE WORD-PART LEVEL (continued)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Vowels						
a. Spells one-letter vowels:						
i. /a/-a, /e/-e, /i/-i, /o/-o, /u/-u.	X					
ii. /ē/-e, /ī/-y.		X				
iii. /ȯ/-a, /ō/-o, /u̇/-u, /o͝o/-o.				X		
iv. /u/-o, /ī/-i.					X	
b. Spells vowel digraphs:						
i. /ā/-ai, /ā/-ay, /ē/-ea, /ē/-ee, /ō/-oa, /ō/-ow, /ū/-oo, /u̇/-oo.		X				
ii. /ī/-ie, /ī/-igh, /ū/-ue, /ū/, /yū/-ew /oi/-oi, /oi/-oy, /ou/-ou, /ou/-ow.				X		
iii. /e/-ea, /ȯ/-au, /ȯ/-augh, /ȯ/-aw, /ȯ/-ough, /u/-ou.					X	
c. Spells vowel-consonant-e pattern:						
i. /ā/-a...e, /ī/-i...e, /ō/-o...e.		X				
ii. /ē/-e...e, /u/-o...e, /ū/, /yū/-u...e.						X
d. Spells vowel-r pattern:						
i. /är/-ar, /ȯr/-or.			X			
ii. /er/-are, /er/-air, /er/-ear, /ėr/-er, /ėr/-ir, /ėr/-ur, /ėr/-or, /ir/-ear, /ȯr/-ore.				X		
e. Spells schwa sound (/ə/).						X

II. SKILLS AT THE WORD/PHRASE LEVEL	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. HANDWRITING						
1. Manuscript						
a. Writes first and last name.	X					
2. Cursive						
a. Writes first and last name.			X			
B. SPELLING						
1. Affixes						
a. Spells new words by adding prefixes: a-, dis-, ex-, re-, un-.					X	
b. Spells plurals by adding -s or -es.		X				
c. Spells verb forms by adding -s, -es, -ed, -ing: one-syllable verbs requiring no changes.			X			
d. Spells new words by adding suffixes:						
i. -ly, -er, -est.				X		
ii. -age, -al, -ance, -ar, -ful, -ion, -less, -ment, -ness, -or, -y.						X
2. Suffixation Processes						
a. Spells plurals by changing f or fe to v and adding -es.				X		
b. Spells new words by changing y to i when adding certain suffixes.*				X		
c. Spells new words by dropping final e when adding certain suffixes.*				X		
d. Spells new words by doubling the final consonant when adding certain suffixes.				X		

*Appropriate grade-level content was subsequently included in the skill specifications (see Humes et al., forthcoming).

II. SKILLS AT THE WORD/PHRASE LEVEL (cont.)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Spells new words by changing the spelling of the root word when adding suffixes: be to pt, d(e) to s, er to r, t to ss, y to ic.						X
3. Vowels						
a. Spells endings with schwa: /ər/ endings: ar, er, or; /əl/ endings: al, el, le.						X
4. Miscellaneous						
a. Spells irregular words				X		
b. Spells compound words.				X		
C. MECHANICS						
1. Punctuation						
a. Uses comma when writing the date.*				X		
b. Uses comma between city and state.*				X		
c. Uses periods at the end of abbreviations and initials.				X		
d. Punctuates salutation and closing of a letter:						
i. personal.			X			
ii. business.					X	
e. Uses apostrophe:						
i. in possessive forms:						
(a) singular.				X		
(b) plural.					X	
ii. in contractions.					X	

*Although the asterisked punctuation skills are relevant to personal letters, they are taught later than letters; thus they should not be considered in the letter-writing assessment for third grade.

II. SKILLS AT THE WORD/PHRASE LEVEL (cont.)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Capitalization						
a. Capitalizes names of persons and the personal pronoun "I."		X				
b. Capitalizes months, days, streets, cities, states, special days or holidays, countries, non-personal proper names.			X			
c. Capitalizes salutation and complimentary closing of a letter.			X			
d. Capitalizes first letter in personal titles: Mr., Miss, Mrs., Ms., Dr.			X			
e. Capitalizes initials in names of persons, and abbreviations for days, months, and streets.				X		
3. Format Skills						
a. Fills in blanks of forms with personal information (e.g., name, birthday): heading of standardized test.			X			
b. Includes the parts of a letter:						
i. personal			X			
ii. business letter					X	
c. Includes all elements of address and return address on an envelope.			X			
D. LANGUAGE						
1. Usage						
a. Distinguishes noun forms:						
i. singular/plural.			X			
ii. proper/common.				X		
b. Uses articles appropriately: a vs. an.			X			

II. SKILLS AT THE WORD/PHRASE LEVEL (cont.)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Diction						
a. Uses specific rather than general terms (descriptive writing).			X			
b. Uses synonyms and antonyms.			X			
c. Uses terms that convey emotions.			X			
d. Uses sensory terms.			X			

III. SKILLS AT THE SENTENCE LEVEL	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. HANDWRITING						
1. Manuscript						
a. Copies sentences.	X					
b. Writes sentences from dictation.	X					
c. Writes connected text legibly.		X				
2. Cursive						
a. Copies sentences.			X			
b. Writes sentences from dictation.			X			
c. Writes connected text legibly.				X		
B. SPELLING						
1. Miscellaneous						
a. Spells homophones.*				X		X
C. MECHANICS						
1. Punctuation						
a. Uses period to end a sentence:						
i. declarative.		X				
ii. imperative.				X		
b. Uses question mark to end an interrogative sentence.		X				
c. Uses exclamation point to end an exclamatory sentence.				X		
d. Uses comma to separate items in a series.				X		
e. Uses comma with direct address.					X	
f. Uses comma, terminal punctuation, and quotation marks in dialogue quotations.					X	

*Appropriate grade-level content is included in skills descriptions (Humes et al., forthcoming).

III. SKILLS AT THE SENTENCE LEVEL (cont.)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Capitalization						
a. Capitalizes first word of sentence.		X				
b. Capitalizes first word in dialogue quotations.				X		
D. LANGUAGE						
1. Usage						
a. Uses articles appropriately: a, an, vs. the.				X		
b. Recognizes correct word order:						
i. subject-verb.	X					
ii. subject-verb-object.		X				
iii. subject-verb-object-phrase.			X			
c. Uses sentences in which the subject and verb agree:						
i. subject and verb adjacent.				X		
ii. subject and verb separate.					X	
iii. verb before subject.						X
d. Relates sentences by transformation:						
i. declarative ⟷ interrogative:						
(a) inversion.			X			
(b) do support.				X		
ii. declarative ⟷ imperative.					X	
e. Uses pronouns appropriately:						
i. nominative forms vs. objective forms after verbs.				X		

III. SKILLS AT THE SENTENCE LEVEL (cont.)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
ii. nominative forms vs. objective forms after prepositions.					X	
f. Uses verbs appropriately:						
i. regular vs. irregular forms			X			
ii. past vs. past participle forms.					X	
g. Uses adjectives appropriately: comparative vs. superlative.				X		
h. Uses adverbs appropriately: comparative vs. superlative.				X		
2. Diction						
a. Uses precise language (expository writing).				X		
3. Techniques						
a. Uses figurative comparisons:						
i. simile.				X		
ii. metaphor.					X	
4. Grammatical Knowledge						
a. Identifies sentence type:						
i. declarative and interrogative.			X			
ii. exclamatory.				X		
iii. imperative.				X		
b. Identifies parts of sentences:						
i. subject and predicate:						
(a) one word.				X		
(b) phrase.					X	

III. SKILLS AT THE SENTENCE LEVEL (cont.)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
ii. direct object.						X
iii. prepositionsl phrase and object of preposition.						X
c. Identifies parts of speech.					X	
d. Identifies sentences as opposed to fragments.					X	
e. Identifies run-on sentences.					X	
f. Distinguishes between main and subordinate clauses.						X
5. Sentence Production						
a. Constructs a variety of sentence structures.						
i. simple sentence.		X				
ii. compound sentence.					X	
iii. complex sentence.						X
b. Expands sentences:						
i. with words.			X			
ii. with phrases.					X	
iii. with subordinate clauses.						X
c. Combines sentences to form sentences with coordinate noun and verb phrases.						X

IV. SKILLS AT THE PARAGRAPH LEVEL	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. MECHANICS						
1. Format Skills						
a. Indents first word of paragraph.		X				
b. Places letter parts correctly:						
i. personal			X			
ii. business					X	
c. Places address and return address in the correct space on an envelope.			X			
d. Uses dialogue for only one speaker in a paragraph.					X	
B. LANGUAGE						
1. Techniques						
a. Uses transitional expressions to link sentences to a paragraph:						
i. chronological expressions.					X	
ii. spatial expressions.					X	
iii. logical expressions.					X	
2. Elaborating						
a. Adds details to a paragraph.			X			
b. Limits a paragraph to one main idea.				X		
c. Constructs introductory/ beginning sentence for a paragraph.				X		
d. Uses a topic sentence for a paragraph.					X	
e. Uses supporting statements for a topic sentence.					X	

IV. SKILLS AT THE PARAGRAPH LEVEL (continued)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Verse Skills						
a. Uses verse form:						
i. couplet.				X		
ii. stanza.					X	
b. Uses end rhyme.				X		
c. Uses unrhymed verse.				X		
d. Uses rhythm.					X	

V. SKILLS AT THE DISCOURSE LEVEL	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. MECHANICS						
1. Format Skills						
a. Uses margins.		X				
B. PLANNING/ORGANIZING						
1. Selects an appropriate topic when given a general subject.				X		
2. Writes notes on a topic.						X
3. Constructs a topic outline.						X
4. Uses chronological order.		X				
5. Uses logical order:						
a. procedural order.				X		
b. order of importance.					X	
c. comparison/contrast order						X
6. Uses spatial order.					X	
7. Uses beginning, body, and end paragraphs.						X
8. Uses narrative organization: Combines beginning, middle, and ending of a story.			X			
C. ELABORATING						
1. General elaborating:						
a. Writes titles.*			X			
b. Uses connotative language to affect audience.						X
c. Uses appropriate formal/informal language.						X
d. Summarizes information.						X
e. Constructs a composition from a topic outline.						X

*Format skills of title writing are not assessed.

V. SKILLS AT THE DISCOURSE LEVEL (cont.)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Constructs a bibliography						X
2. Discourse-type elaborating:						
a. Elaborates for descriptive writing: includes appropriate descriptive attributes.			X			
b. Elaborates for narrative writing:						
i. Includes events appropriate for a straightline narrative.		X				
ii. Includes events appropriate for a climactic narrative.				X		
iii. Includes simple characters.				X		
iv. Completes an open-ended story.			X			
c. Elaborates for expository writing:						
i. Includes factual content:						
(a) information on what, where, when content.			X			
(b) procedural steps.				X		
(c) part/whole relationships.					X	
(d) comparisons/contrasts.						X
d. Elaborates for persuasive writing:						
i. States a point of view.						X
ii. Includes arguments for a point of view.						X
iii. Includes supporting evidence for arguments.						X

V. SKILLS AT THE DISCOURSE LEVEL (cont.)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Elaborates for a letter:						
i. Includes request in a letter of invitation.			X			
ii. Includes content appropriate for a business letter.						X
D. PROOFREADING AND EDITING						
1. Proofreads for final copy.*			X	X	X	X
2. Separates long sentences by deleting and.			X			
3. Varies the structure and length of sentences in discourse.						X
4. Removes unrelated sentences.					X	
5. Removes redundancy.					X	
6. Rewords texts to avoid word repetition:						
a. Substitutes pronouns for nouns.					X	
b. Substitutes synonyms for overused terms.						X
7. Removes ungrammatical language.						X

*The content for assessment at each grade level consists of skills assessed at the preceding grade level.

VI. SKILLS AT THE DISCOURSE PRODUCTS LEVEL	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. PROSE*						
1. Writes a description.			X	X	X	
2. Writes a straightline narrative.		X	X			
3. Writes a short climactic narrative.				X	X	
4. Writes an expository composition.				X	X	X
5. Writes a persuasive composition.						X
6. Writes an invitation in the form of a personal letter.			X			
7. Writes a business letter.						X
B. POETRY						
1. Writes a short descriptive poem.				X		
2. Writes a short narrative poem.					X	

*Grade level differences for skills listed at more than one level are reflected in the subskills, stimulus, and scoring of the corresponding writing sample (see Humes et al., forthcoming).